

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. (Original) A plasmid-free clone of Escherichia coli strain DSM 6601.
2. (Currently amended) The method of preparing a plasmid-free clone according to Claim 1, ~~characterized by~~ comprising the following steps:
 - a) ~~The introduction of~~ introducing a resistance gene into plasmids pMut1 and pMut2,
 - b) ~~The introduction of~~ introducing the *sacB* gene into the plasmids obtained in step a),
 - c) ~~The introduction of~~ introducing the plasmids obtained in step b) into the E. coli strain DSM 6601 and ~~cultivation of~~ cultivating the strain under conditions in which the naturally occurring plasmids pMut1 and pMut2 are displaced by the plasmids obtained in step b); and
 - d) ~~Cultivation of~~ cultivating the clones obtained in step c) that substantially only permit the growth of bacteria that lack the *sacB* gene.
3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, characterized in that the resistance genes are present in an expression cassette.
4. (Currently amended) The method according to Claim 2 ~~or 3~~, characterized in that the resistance genes are selected under tetracycline resistance or kanamycin resistance.
5. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~one of Claims 2 to 4~~ claim 2, characterized in that plasmid pMut1 is marked with a tetracycline resistance cassette and

the *sacB* gene and that the original plasmid pMut2 is marked with a kanamycin resistance cassette and the *sacB* gene.

6. (Currently amended) The method according to ~~of Claims 2 to 5~~ claim 5, in which the bacteria transformed with plasmid pMut1, that is marked with a tetracycline resistance cassette and the *sacB* gene, are cultivated on plates containing tetracycline and subsequently on plates containing saccharose, and that after ~~[[the]]~~ elimination of plasmid pMut1 in the first step ~~[[the]]~~ elimination of plasmid pMut2 takes place by cultivation on kanamycin plates and further cultivation on saccharose plates.

7. (Cancel without prejudice or disclaimer) The use of the plasmid-free clones according to Claim 1 as cloning strains.

8. (Cancel without prejudice or disclaimer) The use of the plasmid-free clones according to Claim 1 for producing a means for treating gastrointestinal problems in animals.